

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

September 1, 2021

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Science, Space & Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson:

As the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology crafts budget reconciliation legislation for Fiscal Year 2022, we urge you to include \$100 million for local fire departments to replace firefighting foam and gear made with toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

As you are aware, PFAS – known as “forever chemicals” – have been linked to serious health problems, including testicular and kidney cancer, as well as harm to the immune and reproductive systems and higher cholesterol. Unlike other chemicals that firefighters may be exposed to in the line of duty, such as those found in smoke, PFAS can remain in the human body for many years. Blood testing has revealed that firefighters have higher levels of PFAS in their blood than the general population. In fact, a recent study of volunteer firefighters in New Jersey found higher levels for some PFAS than the general population and found one PFAS in the blood of 80% of firefighters that is uncommon in the general population. The study also found that higher PFAS levels were associated with more years of firefighting experience. Alarming, cancer is now the leading occupational cause of death among firefighters, underscoring the need for urgent action.

Firefighters are primarily exposed to PFAS through firefighting foam and personal protective equipment made with these forever chemicals. Fortunately, PFAS-free alternatives for both are effective and now readily available, and federal funding could assist local fire departments all over the country in replacing and properly disposing of unsafe gear, should they elect to do so. \$100 million for this specific purpose can ensure that no fire department would need to choose between removing forever chemicals from their equipment and securing other essentials. The House of Representatives has taken significant steps this year to address the PFAS crisis in the United States, specifically by passing the PFAS Action Act, and we believe that it is time build on that initiative to help protect those who are dedicated to protecting us.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna  
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Ann McLane Kuster  
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